



Department of Planning and Zoning



The Minor Subdivision Process

WHAT IS A MINOR SUBDIVISION?

A minor subdivision is the division of a residential or agricultural parcel of land into four or fewer buildable lots for the immediate or future transfer of property ownership.

WHAT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED DURING THE DESIGN OF A MINOR SUBDIVISION?

Design

The subdivision plan should be designed to reflect the unique character of the property by responding to its topography, wetlands, streams and forests and its relationship to adjoining properties and roads.

Any division of land within the County must be in accordance with the procedures and standards set forth in the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations.

Zoning

Permitted density, minimum lot size and building setback requirements are regulated by the County's Zoning Regulations and zoning maps.

Water and Sewer

If a private sewage system is to be used for the subdivision, the Health Department must conduct a soil percolation test on the property. If the property is located within the metropolitan district, the proposed lots must, in most instances, be connected to the County's public water and sewer systems.

WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR SUBMITTING A MINOR SUBDIVISION PLAN?

Prior to submitting any plans to the County, you as a property owner, must consult with and hire a Maryland registered land surveyor or engineer. The consultant surveys your property and prepares the proposed subdivision plans and any supplemental reports, plans or studies required to process your minor subdivision. Some of the supplemental documents that are often required are:

- soils map with topography
- forest stand delineation and forest conservation plan
- wetland analysis
- floodplain study
- noise study
- landscape plan

HOW IS THE PLAN PROCESSED?

The five basic steps for processing a minor subdivision plan are:

Step 1: Pre-Submission Community Meeting:

A developer or property owner must schedule and hold a meeting with community residents for all new residential projects prior to submitting subdivision plans to the County. This is an opportunity for community residents to learn about, ask questions and express any concerns regarding the proposed residential development.

Step 2: Submission of the Plan to the County:

The owner or consultant submits the completed subdivision plans by appointment, to the Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ), accompanied by a Final Plan Application and Checklist and the required fees. The application and checklist assist applicants in understanding the plan preparation requirements. Filing fees are based on a Schedule of Fees adopted each year by the County Council. The current applications and filing fees for a final subdivision plan may be obtained from the DPZ Public Service Desk. Applications and checklists are also available at . The fee schedule can also be found on-line at www.howardcountymd.gov

Step 3: Review of the Subdivision Plan:

Regulatory Compliance Review

The DPZ is responsible for processing and approving minor subdivision plans with assistance from the Subdivision Review Committee (SRC). The SRC will review the subdivision plan to verify compliance with County and State regulations.

The SRC includes the following County and State Departments:

- Planning and Zoning
- Health Department
- Recreation and Parks
- Inspections, Licenses and Permits
- Public School System
- State Highway Administration
- Soil Conservation District
- Fire and Rescue Services
- Public Works

Step 4: Decision is Made on Plan

The DPZ compiles the comments from the SRC and within 60 days from submission of the plan, a written decision is provided to the property owner indicating that the plan is approved, approved with modifications or in need of revisions.

If revised plans are needed in order to approve the plan, the owner must revise the plans and resubmit the plans to the DPZ within 45 days of receiving the written decision.

- **Adequate Public Facilities Allocation and School Tests**

Prior to granting approval, the DPZ tests the subdivision for the availability of housing unit allocations and for adequate public school facilities based on charts adopted each year by the County Council. If tentative housing unit allocations are not available, or school capacity does not exist, the proposed subdivision will be placed on hold awaiting a change in status.

Step 5: Submission of Final Subdivision Plat Original and Fees

The owner or consultant must submit the final plat original to the DPZ for signatures and recordation within 180 days of receiving approval. If the deadline is missed the plan will be considered withdrawn, and the approval will be void. Additional processing and recording fees are required with the final plat originals.

The Director of the Department of Planning and Zoning, the Howard County Health Officer, and the Chief of the Development Engineering Division must sign the final plat originals.

The DPZ will record the final plat in the Land Records of Howard County and assign permanent housing unit allocations to complete the process. Signature approval and recordation of the final plat originals are completed usually within two to four weeks from the date of their submission to the County.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE PLAT IS RECORDED?

Once the plat is recorded, the owner is entitled to transfer ownership of the recorded lots or apply for building permits to initiate house construction. If the lots are located in the Planned Service Area for both public water and sewer, a site development plan must be approved prior to obtaining a building permit.

AN IMPORTANT NOTE:

Howard County's land use regulations are intended to promote the health, safety and general welfare of County residents. This brochure is meant to provide a basic understanding of the minor subdivision process in Howard County. It is not intended as a substitute for the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations.

For more information contact:
The Howard County Department of Planning and Zoning

(410) 313-2350, TTY 410-313-2323 or www.howardcountymd.gov or visit Planning & Zoning's Customer Service Center on the first floor of the George Howard Building, 3430 Courthouse Drive, Ellicott City, Maryland, 212043.

Office Hours are:
Monday through Friday
8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Written inquiries may also be sent to our office at the above address.

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